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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CURTIUS RUFUS, THE MACEDONIAN MUTINY AT OPIS AND ALEXANDER'S IRANIAN POLICY IN 324 BC

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The years 331-330 BC marked the end of the old Achaemenid order in Asia. At Gaugamela, Alexander III called the Great and his Macedonian armed forces finally defeated the army of Darius III and occupied Babylon. On entering Susiana, Persis and Media, Alexander crowned his victorious war against the Achaemenid empire. Darius' death at the hands of his Iranian officials (summer 330) gave Alexander room for more political manoeuvring. So far, the Macedonian king had concentrated on military conquest of Asia. But his empire needed institutions, court, ceremonies, and a defined state concept. Alexander had not taken any major steps to that end in the old Achaemenid centres of Persis, Susiana, or Media but he did in eastern Iran; a complete about-face in Alexander's policies came about as he entered the Parthia-Hyrcania satrapy in 330 (Olbrycht 2004, 26-8 and 2006-07). At that time Alexander ostentatiously stood up as an admirer of Iranian ways (Diod. Sic. 18.48.5). Among Alexander's innovations in the year 330, the most spectacular was his acceptance of Iranian dress and regalia.[1] The act was designed to ingratiate him with the Iranians: Arrian (7.29.4) stresses that Alexander's acceptance of vestments and insignia was a shrewd move to win "barbarians" over to his side. Alexander's concept of royal rule in Asia was being filled with a new content in Central Asia (329-327) as is aptly described by Plutarch

[1] Curt. 6.6.1-11; Diod. Sic. 17.77.4-7; Arr. 4.7.4; Plut. *Alex*. 45.1-3; 47.5; Eratosthenes, *FGrHist* 241 F 30 ap. Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 1.8; Ephippus, *FGrHist* 126 F 5 = Athen. 537E-538B; Iust. 12.3.8-12; *Epitoma Metensis* 2. Details in Olbrycht 2004, 286-93.

(*Alex*. 47.5), who used such notions as mixing up and community (ἀνάκρασις and κοινωνία) between Macedonians and Iranians. It was becoming increasingly clear that Alexander's empire was to be governed by Iranians next to Macedonians. The latter, however, were not about to accept this state meekly. The surge in pro-Iranian innovations introduced by Alexander surprised most Macedonians, who were opposed to them. Beginning with the official proclamation of the new policy toward the Iranians in Parthia, Alexander's attitude to the Macedonians underwent a considerable change. Increasingly pro-Iranian policy was bound to pit the king against his Macedonian environment. A conflict mounted between Alexander, who was yielding to "barbarity" and increasingly relying on his Iranian subjects, and traditionally-minded Macedonians.[2] Source accounts often quote the chief accusations hurled by Macedonians at Alexander. Over the years, the breach deepened and came to a head in the Opis mutiny and its consequent bloody quelling by Alexander.

After returning from India, Alexander decided to introduce sweeping reforms in the army and further changes in his policy toward the Iranians. Both processes were closely interlocked. The first wave of reforms took place at Susa in 324. Several months later, at Opis, Alexander took further essential steps that crowned his policies and monarchical concept developed from 330. The Macedonian mutiny at Opis, closely related to the preceding occurrences at Susa, may well mark the climax of Alexander's pro-Iranian policy. Here it was that a rebellion of Macedonian soldiers was ruthlessly suppressed and the Iranians were put into positions of power (Curt. 10.2.8-4.3 with large lacunae; Diod. Sic. 17.109.2f.; Plut. *Alex*. 71.2-9; Iust. 12.11.4-12.10; Arr. 7.8.1-11 and 7.9). The crucial confrontation between Alexander and Macedonian traditionalists at Opis deserves special attention for it was one of the most significant events of Alexander's reign. But in spite of its importance, there are just few studies devoted to this mutiny and the related sources.[3] It seems therefore worthwhile to re-examine the ancient accounts dealing with the Opis events. The most detailed evidence is in Curtius Rufus' *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 10.2-4. Curtius' account, mutilated by some gaps, is highly rhetorical and a number of essential points are contained in speeches. According to some scholars, Curtius' rhetorical methods include

[2] Heckel 1996; Badian 2000; Müller 2003; Olbrycht 2004, 31-41.

[3] Cf. Wüst 1953a, 1953b and 1954; Carney 1996, 37-42; Nagle 1996. The Opis mutiny has been briefly analyzed in works generally devoted to Alexander's reign, see Schachermeyr 1973, 492ff.; Lauffer 1993, 173-5; Bosworth 1988a, 159-61. Useful comments are offered by Hamilton 1969, 197; Dempsie 1991, 93-119; Hutzel 1974, 189-214.

not only the manipulation of his material but also the invention of facts (Atkinson 1980, 187; Baynham 1998, 94f.). The major accusation raised against Curtius is that he wrote his work without concern for historicity.[4] But if one rejects Curtius' evidence in its entirety, many of the essential elements concerning Alexander's policy in 324 would be called into question. This attitude is pointless for it takes scepticism too far. It seems rather that scholarly research has overestimated the rhetorical and artistic contribution of Curtius while neglecting its actual relation to historical events. Any estimation of Curtius' reliability requires an investigation of his attitude to facts by comparing with other evidence. Most important is the next research premise: any assessment of whether Curtius provides "bad history"[5] or whether he displays concern for factual accuracy largely depends on a proper and coherent reconstruction of Alexander's policy in 324. Within the compass of this paper it is only possible to indicate briefly how the events at Opis are to be placed in the framework of Alexander's political agenda. I hope to demonstrate that Curtius' narrative concerning the confrontation between Alexander and his Macedonian soldiers in 324 is consistent and fits in with other evidence available.

Main sources dealing with Alexander's reforms at Opis are, besides Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, Arrian's *Anabasis* and the heavily abbreviated accounts by Diodorus and Pompeius Trogus (in the epitome of Justinus). Informative references are offered by Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*. The present analysis does not try to search through for the lost primary sources written by Ptolemy, Aristobulus, Clitarchus and others.[6]

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At Susa, a sumptuous wedding was held in which Alexander and about 90 Macedonian Companions (*hetairoi*) married aristocratic Iranian women.[7] The weddings were celebrated in the "Persian" style (Arr. 7.4.7).

[4] In a recent study it has been argued that one should not trust any evidence from Curtius' book 10, unless it is supported by another historian; according to this view, Curtius provides mainly "imaginative fiction" (McKechnie 1999, 60).

[5] As argued by Nagle 1996, 152.

[6] On the primary sources for the reign of Alexander the Great, see Seibert 1981, 1-61; Schachermeyr 1974, 149-61; Pédech 1984; Goukowsky 1991; Hammond 1983b and 1993; Baynham 2003.

[7] Diod. Sic. 17.107.6; Arr. 7.4.4-8; 7.6.2; Plut. *Alex.* 70.3; Iust. 12.10.9f.; Phylarchus, *FGrHist* 81 F 41 = Athen. 539B-540A; Chares, *FGrHist* 125 F 4 = Athen. 538B-539A. Cf. Bosworth 1980, 11f.; Badian 1985, 480; Lauffer 1993, 169f.

The great tent in which the ceremony was held was part of Achaemenid tradition (Athen. 12.538B-D after Chares of Mytilene (FGrHist 125 F 4); 12.539D-E after Phylarchus; Ael. *VH* 9.3; Polyaen. 4.3.24). Characteristically, some Macedonians were opposed to the "Persian" ritual, but the marriages themselves, as far as we know, were not questioned by anyone (Arr. 7.6.2). The king ordered at Susa that Macedonians legalize their unions with Asiatic women. Their number ran to more than 10,000 (Arr. 7.4.8). Those women were predominantly Iranian (cf. Berve 1938, 158f.).

Unquestionably, the Susa weddings were a display of Alexander's pro-Iranian policy and continued in this respect, as is best demonstrated by Alexander himself, his earlier endeavours, especially those in Central Asia. In the spring of 327, Alexander married Roxana (Arr. 4.19.5f.; Curt. 8.4.21-30; Plut. *Alex*. 47.7), and a number of his Companions married Iranian women (Diod. Sic. 17, arg. λ′; *Epitoma Metensis* 31). The king's union with Roxana was designed, in a larger sense, to bring about peace and closer ties between Macedonians and Iranians (Curt. 8.4.25: "ut diceret ad stabiliendum regnum pertinere Persas et Macedones conubio iungi: hoc uno modo et pudorem victis et superbiam victoribus detrahi posse"). For the Iranians, the marriage was a proof that Alexander had changed his policy toward them to a more conciliatory and peace-minded stance.

The split between Alexander and Macedonian traditionalists manifested itself forcefully after Susa saw the arrival of 30,000 young Iranian soldiers called *epigonoi* whose appearance triggered an outburst of Macedonian discontent (Diod. Sic. 17.108.1-3; Arr. 7.6.1; Plut. *Alex*. 71.1; Iust. 12.11.4. In Curtius' text, the account of the *epigonoi* in Susa is not preserved). Rank-and-file Macedonians finally realized that they were not irreplaceable. Alexander's threat made on the Hyphasis in India (326) to the effect that he would be followed by barbarians if his countrymen failed him could now be fulfilled (Curt. 9.2.33). Arrian points to the fact that Alexander was contriving every means of reducing his dependence on Macedonians in future (Arr. 7.6.2). Apparently the king pushed for a confrontation in order finally to break Macedonian resistance against his concept of monarchy and the empire with a dual Macedonian-Iranian élite. This supposition is supported by Alexander's ostentatious praise for the Iranian *epigonoi* phalanx as well as for Peucestas' adoption of Iranian ways.

A long list of Macedonian accusations formulated at Susa in Arrian's account (7.6.1-5) embraces not only recruiting Iranian soldiers called *epigonoi* and introducing wedding ceremonies after the Persian rite, but

also wearing "Median" dress, admission of Iranian cavalrymen into the ranks of the Companions and the royal guard (*agema*), expanding the whole cavalry by enlisting "barbarians," and Peucestas' "barbarization." The main complaint targeted the entire behaviour of Alexander, who had "completely changed into a barbarian" and abandoned Macedonian ways.

Among problems recited by Arrian 7.6.1-5 on the occasion of the Susa conflict, a distinction should be made between current issues and past developments. This distinction is of much consequence for an assessment of Alexander's policy toward the Iranians. Past developments would definitely include the king's use of "Median dress," in evidence from 330. Similarly, inclusion of Iranians in the cavalry is confirmed from 330 when the *hippakontistai* were formed, again in 328 in Sogdiana and Bactria, and during the Indian campaign (Olbrycht 2004, 113-71). Finally, accusations of Alexander as a "barbarian" span a longer period, beginning in 330. Current issues included the appearance in the king's camp of Iranian *epigonoi* and the Iranization of Peucestas. Arrian also refers to a substantial reorganization of the Companions shortly after the Indian campaign according to which the hipparchies' number was at that time diminished to four. Additionally, Alexander established a new fifth hipparchy, which "was not entirely barbarian" (Arr. 7.6.4). Apparently, it was a mixed Iranian-Macedonian formation, dominated by Asians.

While describing the events at Susa, Diodorus (17.108.1-3) stresses that the Macedonians had mutinied in India but were frequently unruly when called into an assembly and ridiculed Alexander's pretence that Ammon was his father. For these reasons Alexander had formed the new unit from a single age-group of Persians which was capable of serving as a counter-balance to the Macedonian phalanx, i.e. *antitagma*. Indeed, Alexander took delight in the skill of that Macedonian-trained Iranian formation; the *epigonoi* "were warmly commended by the king after demonstrating their skill and discipline in the use of their weapons" (Diod. Sic. 17.108.2) and "displayed remarkable skill and agility" (Plut. *Alex*. 71.1). Clearly, the *epigonoi* were to be Alexander's new army to replace his Macedonian phalanx. Strikingly, Arrian fails to describe the origin of the *epigonoi* whose appearance at Susa infuriated Macedonians. After all, they were formed before the Indian expedition, their presence at Susa only triggering the dormant tensions caused by the king's policies.[8]

[8] Creation of the *epigonoi* in 327: Curt. 8.5.1. Diod. Sic. 17.108.2 uses the phrase χρόνον ἱκανόν implying a longer timespan embracing the training of *epigonoi* prior to the Susa conflict.

In agitation, Macedonians now openly criticized the rapidly rising importance of Iranians in the king's army and any signs of the court and ceremonial becoming Iranized. Alexander was accused of utter barbarization and rejection of Macedonian ways. Interestingly, the king did not launch repressions against the Macedonian opposition at Susa. Apparently Alexander deliberately postponed the confrontation until he was at Opis, the better to prepare for it.

Among the Macedonians attitudes toward the Iranians varied. Most Macedonians, especially among the infantry troops, were apprehensive of Alexander's pro-Iranian policy and insulted by what they perceived as his changing the traditional kingship. Those who openly criticized the king for his "barbarization" were usually ruthlessly eliminated. Beginning in 330 with the Philotas affair, repression recurred against Alexander's critics, their accusations as a rule focusing on "barbarization" seen in adoption of Iranian ways and support to Iranians, although in truth these charges were often accompanied by other factors, such as Alexander's desired deification as the son of Zeus-Ammon and the soldiers' weariness of incessant combat. Moderate resistance to Alexander's pro-Iranian polices was personified in Craterus, whose criticism of the "barbarization" was common knowledge (Plut. *Eum*. 6.3; *Alex*. 47.9).

But Macedonians also included admirers of pro-Iranian policies who were clearly favoured by the king from 330. Among them was Hephaestion, a supporter of Alexander's innovations in Iranization (Plut. *Alex*. 47.9). It is therefore hardly surprising that, by Alexander's order, Hephaestion was responsible at the court for matters involving "barbarians," just as the traditionalist Craterus had Macedonians and Hellenes to deal with. Both Macedonians, by the way, were deeply at odds with each other (Plut. *Alex*. 47.9-12), this personal conflict reflecting the division in the Macedonian élite over attitudes toward Asians, and especially Iranians. Incidentally, this division among Macedonians reached a peak after Alexander's death at Babylon. Among the Companions, pro-Iranian tendencies are definitely confirmed for Peucestas. A similar attitude was displayed by Leonnatus[9] and Perdiccas, who—after Hephaestion died—took his place as second to the king, and later received the royal seal from the dying Alexander,[10] "a fact that Ptolemy the historian took pains to suppress."[11]

[9] Arr. *Succ*. 1a.2; *Suda* s.v. 'Leonnatos' = Arr. *Succ*. fr. 12. Cf. Heckel 1992, 103f.
[10] Curt. 10.54.4; Iust. 12.15.12; Diod. Sic. 17.117.3; 18.2.4; Nep. *Eum*. 2.1; *Liber de morte Alexandri* 112.
[11] As rightly observed by Heckel 1992, 143f.

According to Curtius Rufus (10.2.8f.), before final decision concerning the veterans, Alexander announced that all soldiers' debts would be paid by him.[12] In the preserved account, no location is given. All the other sources place the payment of debts at Susa. According to Plutarch (*Alex*. 70.3ff.), the freeing of debts ensued after the wedding ceremonies at Susa. A similar sequence is provided by Arrian who speaks of Alexander deciding to pay the debts of his soldiers after the wedding ceremonies (Arr. 7.5.1ff.). The available accounts give various amounts of money.[13]

Curtius (*loc. cit*.) shortens the time sequence between the Susa debts settlement and the demobilization plans as well as the Macedonian mutiny at Opis. Likewise, in Justinus 12.11.1, the payment of the debts immediately precedes the demobilization order and the mutiny. Diodorus (17.109.1f.) argues that the veterans were discharged first, and then freed of debts. His wrong sequence of events seems to stem from misunderstanding concerning Alexander's intentions to discharge parts of his army, announced probably at Susa, and the king's final decision at Opis.

Both in Curtius' and in Arrian's accounts (Curt. 10.2.10; Arr. 7.5.1-3), Alexander's decision to pay the debts caused common mistrust for the soldiers believed the king intended to test them. This is another testimony to a lack of mutual confidence between Alexander and his Macedonian soldiery in 324.

Incited at Susa, Alexander's conflict with masses of Macedonians mounted to a peak at Opis. An open revolt was staged, but by then Alexander had built a perfect substitute for the rebellious Macedonians in the form of an Iranian phalanx force called in the sources *epigonoi* or *antitagma*. Desires for deification and acceptance of Iranian customs are quoted in sources as the main causes for Alexander's moral decline.[14] It is clear that the mutiny was actually a political confrontation concerning Alexander's policies, his relationship to the army and to the kingship and state.[15]

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[12] On the freeing of the army's debts at Susa, see Dempsie 1991, 87-92; Hutzel 1974, 170-5.

[13] Details in Dempsie 1991, 87f. and Hutzel 1974, 170f.

[14] Arr. 7.8.3; Iust. 12.11.8. Cf. Schachermeyr 1973, 492ff.

[15] The confrontation between Alexander and his Macedonian soldiers can be termed "mutiny" for it was an open rebellion of soldiers directed against the king. Diodorus uses the word ταραχή ('disorder, confusion,' 17.109.2). Curtius applies the terms *tumultus* (10.2.13), *seditio* (10.2.12; 10.4.3) and *consternatio* (10.2.15), while Justinus (12.11.8) gives *seditio*. Cf. *OLD* s.v. 'seditio,' 1726; Adams 1986, 50. Carney (1996, 37-42) tries to demonstrate that the "confrontation at Opis"

The location of the mutiny at Opis is given by Arrian (7.8.1). Curtius offers no hints for there is a lacuna in his text. On the basis of Diodorus' account, it is generally assumed that the Vulgate tradition places the mutiny at Susa. Actually, in Diodorus events at Susa and the following open Macedonian mutiny are pressed in three different passages. In the first account Diodorus describes the *antitagma*, i.e. the *epigonoi* coming to Susa (17.108.1-3). But the Macedonian mutiny itself, without naming a place, is described in another chapter, 17.109. In 17.110.1f., Diodorus reports Alexander's military reforms favouring Iranians. It is only in passage 17.110.4, after naming the discharge of veterans, that Diodorus mentions Susa which implies that the preceding events took place in this city. Justinus 12.11.4 does not name Susa at all. Plutarch (*Alex*. 70f.) seems to locate the mutiny at Susa for his account of the Susa weddings and the *epigonoi* who came first to Susa is immediately followed by the description of the Macedonian rebellion. However, Arrian's location of the mutiny at Opis seems to be more probable and is accepted in the present study.[16]

The confrontation at Opis was closely related to the issue crucial to most Macedonians, i.e. to demobilization. It is at Opis that Alexander finally decided to send home a number of his Macedonian veterans under the command of Craterus (Iust. 12.11.4; 12.7; Arr. 7.12.1; Diod. Sic. 17.109.1, cf. 18.4.1; 18.12.1, 18.16.4; Curt. 10.10.15). The sources vary in the details. Arrian and Diodorus speak of 10,000 veterans (Arr. 7.12.1; Diod. Sic. 17.109.1; 18.4.1; 18.12.1). The number of 11,000 soldiers, given in Justinus (12.12.7), must include 1,000 Persian slingers and bowmen, mentioned with Craterus' corps by Diodorus (18.16.4). They were apparently an escorting formation for the heavy Macedonian units. This is corroborated by Curtius (10.2.27) claiming that the Iranians should make up the escort for the leaving Macedonians soldiers.

Alexander did not demobilize all the Macedonians—the king ordered a force of 13,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry from Europe to be selected for him to keep back in Asia (Curt. 10.2.8f.).[17]

Usually, reasons for the mutiny at Opis are not clearly stated in recent studies. Some scholars tend to evaluate the mutiny as "illogical" or

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cannot be termed "mutiny," but her arguments, based on playing down the dimensions of the rebellion, fail to convince.

[16] Cf. Lauffer 1993, 173-5.

[17] It is not explicitly stated that all those soldiers were Macedonians. Bosworth (1980, 19) argues that not only Macedonians but also troops from other countries are understood.

"irrational."[18] The evidence contradicts such views. Curtius' account (10.2.12), the fullest one for the origins of the rebellion, gives a consistent picture of the situation. Thus, Alexander demobilized 10,000 Macedonians, and retained the rest in Asia. The act of discharging soldiers met with a staunch opposition from those Macedonians who were to stay with the king. The others feared that the king would establish a permanent residence in Asia. Apparently the upset soldiers felt that Alexander intended to replace them with Iranians.[19] In sum, all wanted to be dismissed from service. Other Macedonian resentments must have been preserved in the lost fragments of the text. To the accusations Curtius refers in the statement that the rebelling soldiers filled the camp "with mutinous comments and attacked the king with more abuse than even before" (transl. by J.C. Yardley). The ever-present mistrust was to be confirmed when the veterans' children were retained in Asia. Generally, Curtius gives a consistent picture of the reasons for the mutiny.

Arrian's narrative (7.8.1-3) is essentially similar to the picture given by Curtius. According to him, Alexander announced sending home men unfit for active service. Initially, Arrian stresses that the veterans felt insulted for they believed Alexander considered them useless for war. The historian puts emphasis on the emotional dimension, i.e. on jealousy and feelings of rejection which led to Macedonian rebellion. Afterwards, however, Arrian gives a list of grievances including the Macedonian demand that all soldiers should be discharged (7.8.3). In other words, general demobilization was the crucial issue. According to Arrian, the army had long harboured discontent with the king's "Persian" dress, creation of the *epigonoi*, and admission of barbarians to the Companions (7.8.2). Alexander, courted in a barbarian manner, was not so "kindly to the Macedonians" anymore. Moreover, the soldiers called on him to campaign himself in company with his father, referring in mockery to Ammon (7.8.3). The whole list of the grievances in Arrian 7.8.2-3 is sometimes considered to be a doublet of the list in Arrian 7.6.2-5 referring to the Susa conflict (Badian 1985, 482 n. 1). Their similarity is based rather on the fact that Macedonian accusations hurled against Alexander both at Susa and at Opis were in fact identical.

Justinus 12.11.5 states that those Macedonians who were retained in Asia resented the fact that the veterans were leaving and demanded

[18] Bosworth (1988a, 159) maintains that the discharge "was a logical enough move" but the ensuing protest was "understandable if illogical." Carney (1996, 37) states that "some aspects of the Opis quarrel defy rational analysis."
[19] Wüst 1953a, 422; Badian 1985, 481f.

demobilization too. According to Diodorus the Macedonians who remained with the king became insubordinate interrupting Alexander's speech by shouting (17.109.2). Plutarch (*Alex*. 71.1) stresses that the Macedonians asked the king to send them all away and combines the feelings of rejection with fear of the new royal Iranian formations; the Macedonians were worried and depressed because of the display of the *epigonoi*.

The evidence is thus unambiguous—the main demand of the Macedonians, as transmitted in Curtius, Arrian, and all the other authors, was that of general demobilization.

There is another issue which requires attention. The Macedonian traditionalists felt alienated by Alexander's claim to be Ammon's son which implied the rejection of his "terrestrial" father Philip. Macedonians regarded Alexander's pretensions to divinity as ridiculous and derided the king and his alleged father Ammon, a fact that drove Alexander furious (Iust. 12.11.6; Diod. Sic. 17.108.3; Arr. 7.8.3.). At the same time, some scholarly attempts to narrow Macedonian resentments to Alexander's claim to divine descent as the focal point are unconvincing. It should be noted that the main contentious issue, inflamed already at Susa, as stressed in Arrian, Diodorus, Justinus, and Plutarch, was fear of the Iranian *epigonoi* and other Iranian formations and growing Macedonian hostility to the more and more privileged Iranians. In this connection, Alexander's claim to be Ammon's son was just one of the examples of the king's "barbarization" offensive to Macedonian sentiment (cf. Badian 1985, 483). The real moot point remained the growing significance of the Iranians and their—in some respects—predominating position in the army of Alexander.

In his account of the Opis events, Curtius mentions Alexander's punishment of the mutineers and their humiliation and underscores the king's manifestly positive attitude to the Iranians. In this framework, Curtius reports three speeches (cf. Helmreich 1927; Baynham 1998, 46-56). It seems very probable that the speeches were really given at Opis according to the long established Macedonian tradition. Alexander used speeches and oratory skills to control his army (Carney 1996, 28f.; Hammond 1999, 249f.). Each of the orations offers credible facts, although, of course, speeches in Curtius are not accurate records of what was really said. Possibly they existed in the primary sources used by Curtius and were reworked by the Roman writer. But the essential point is that they offer historical substance of primary importance, disregarding the fact whether they are genuine or not.

According to Curtius (10.2.15-29), Alexander delivered a stern speech to the Macedonian assembly (Helmreich 1927, 121-6; Dempsie 1991, 97-107). The king accused Macedonians of deserting him, of disobedience and of flouting his authority and kingship. He declared to treat the rebellious Macedonians as no more soldiers but "thoroughly ungrateful hirelings" (10.2.21). These were serious accusations, much stronger than during the mutiny at the Hyphasis (Helmreich 1927, 122-5). What is striking is another point—in his Opis speech, Alexander names the "Persians", i.e. the Iranians, as his real support. The Iranians should make up the escort for the leaving Macedonian soldiers (10.2.27). Moreover, Alexander declares he would bestow "honour and preference upon those who were left with him" (10.2.29). All these elements are in parallel with Alexander's threats from the Hyphasis confrontation (Curt. 9.2.33: "Scythae Bactrianique erunt mecum, hostes paulo ante, nunc milites nostri," cf. Helmreich 1927, 125f.). There follows a lacuna in Curtius' account. From the historical point of view, the speech gives a faithful depiction of Alexander's pro-Iranian policy at the time.

Justinus summarizes Alexander's speech to the Macedonians in which the king rebuked the soldiers, and "proffered gentle advice against tarnishing a glorious campaign with mutiny" (12.11.7). Plutarch (*Alex*. 71.3) and Diodorus (17.109.2) refer to the speech too.

Arrian (7.9f.) also gives a speech of Alexander to the Macedonians, but he places it after the repressions.[20] His concern is to show the conflict between the king and his Macedonian soldiers as merely a momentary confrontation not involving a third party, the Iranians' position being intentionally diminished at the beginning. The desertion of the Macedonians is mentioned (7.10.5). Alexander underscores his pro-Iranian measures, naming the Macedonian-Iranian marriages ("I have made the same marriages as you," 7.10.3). The growing military role of the Iranians comes to a head when Alexander speaks derisively of deserting Macedonians at Susa who "handed him over to the protection of the barbarians he had conquered" (7.10.7). This formula points to the fact

[20] Cf. Hutzel 1974, 195-208; Dempsie 1991, 97; Hammond 1983a and 1999, 249f. Scholarly opinions on the speech are quite different. According to Wüst 1953b, Alexander's speech in Arrian is not authentic and was composed by Clitarchus, and then transmitted by Aristobulus. Hammond (1999, 249) argues that the speech rests "on good evidence" (Ptolemy with the imaginary *Royal Journal* and Aristobulus are meant). Nagle (1996, 152) assumes that the speech's "substance was spoken by Alexander at Opis."

testified in the Vulgate and in Plutarch—that the Iranians became the bodyguards of the king.

In sum, there is no reason to doubt that Alexander tried to appeal to his soldiers, for Macedonian kings or generals often addressed the armies in that way. A closer examination of the facts delivered in the speech shows that Arrian transmits the same focal points as Curtius.[21] The common focus is on the desertion of the Macedonians and the king's necessity of turning to the "Persians." Significantly, Alexander did not respond to single grievances but related to the monarchy's character and the Iranians' role in the empire.

Alexander's speech failed to convince the Macedonian audience and the king decided to use repressive measures. According to Curtius, after his speech Alexander leaped down from the platform and handed personally 13 ringleaders to his bodyguard (*custodes corporis*) to be kept in custody (10.2.30). The same action is reported in Justinus 12.11.8 (the king seized 13 ringleaders), and in Diodorus 17.109.2 (without figures). Arrian 7.8.3 counts 13 detained but he says, in a less dramatic way, that the king pointed to the instigators and had them arrested by his hypaspists. According to Arrian this action took place before the speech to the Macedonians but this sequence is inconsistent. Curtius is more convincing in showing that Alexander first tried to persuade his soldiers to remain obedient, but, seeing their open hostility, decided to use repressions. Significantly, Arrian tries to whitewash Alexander and does not describe the execution of the Macedonian ringleaders.

Curtius offers a sinister picture of the Macedonians' surrender: the soldiers became terror-stricken for they learned towards evening of their comrades' execution and now they did everything to express individually their increased loyalty and devotion (10.3.1-4.). It seems that those 13 rebels were not the only Macedonians to be executed for Curtius names other soldiers sentenced to death and executed after the speech of Alexander to the Iranians (10.4.1f.). Death penalties were deliberately conducted against Macedonian custom to humiliate the victims further. The executioners were Iranians. The punishment employed was drowning—the prisoners were to be hurled into the river, still in their bonds (10.4.2). This kind of punishment was shameful to the sentenced for executions in Macedonia were conducted through stoning ("according to Macedonian custom," Curt. 6.11.10 and 38) or spearing to death (Arr. 3.26.3). There is no reason to doubt Curtius' evidence concerning the kind

[21] This point was made by Wüst 1953a, 424 and Bosworth 1988b, 101ff.

of punishment.[22] Drowning as punishment is documented in ancient Babylonia, not in Macedonia or Greece (Duncan 1904, 190; cf. Latte 1940). It must have been used by the Persians in the Achaemenid period.

Trying to suppress the Macedonian mutiny, Alexander took decisive steps carried out for their intimidating effect. Curtius 10.3.3 stresses that the Macedonians were terror-stricken "because of the confidence with which he so forcefully exerted his authority." It seems that initially the Macedonians hoped to repeat the situation from India when their mutiny forced Alexander to sound the retreat. Now the king's position changed—the next day after the executions the Macedonians were denied an audience (10.3.5).

Faced by the Macedonian uprising, the king called an assembly of Iranian soldiers to give a speech to them. Significantly, he ordered to confine the Macedonians in their camp (Curt. 10.3.6), another humiliation for them. It was the *epigonoi* and Iranian cavalry who enabled Alexander to overcome his Macedonian soldiers. Actually, Curtius uses the term "foreign soldiers" (*peregrini milites*) for the assembly. But they were not soldiers of different nations. The text says that Alexander had an interpreter called and gave an address (10.3.6). The testimony is striking—one interpreter apparently means one language. At that time Iranian languages were in fact dialects closely connected with each other. Eratosthenes (cited in Strabo 15.2.8) speaks of the peoples in Ariana, i.e. Iran and Central Asia, including Persians, Bactrians, Medes, and Sogdians, as "speaking approximately the same language, with but slight variations." Curtius' passage supports the assumption that "foreign soldiers" of Alexander assembled at Opis were in fact Iranians. That conclusion is additionally corroborated by the statement that in his speech Alexander addressed only "Persians", the term being the common designation of the Iranians at that time. Justinus 12.12.1 speaks of "auxilia Persarum."

Curtius (10.3) is the only writer to give a direct speech of Alexander to the Iranians (Helmreich 1927, 126-8; Dempsie 1991, 109-16). Justinus 12.12.2f. reports a very similar speech in *oratio obliqua*. Other sources do not know the speech, but have Alexander talking to some "Persians" and then giving them positions of power (Diod. Sic. 17.109.3; Plut. *Alex.* 71.4; Arr. 7.11.1).

The speech in Curtius is incompletely preserved but offers meaningful insights into the character of Alexander's policies at that time and the role

[22] Dempsie (1991, 116) wrongly assumes that "Curtius is choosing a particularly sensational means...seen by the Romans as an example of foreign punishment."

played by the Iranians. Alexander praises dedication to loyalty (even to the former Persian kings, cf. Helmreich 1927, 127) and courage amongst the Iranians as well as stresses their obedience (10.3.7-10). Then he underscores the significance of his marriages to Roxana and Stateira, and the marriages of his Macedonian dignitaries to Iranian princesses (10.3.11f.) arguing that his intention was by "this sacred union to erase all distinction between conquered and conquerors" (10.3.12: "ut hoc sacro foedere omne discrimen victi et victoris excluderem"). Some phrases sound like Alexander's political slogans: "So you can believe that you are my soldiers by family, not conscription. Asia and Europe are now one and the same kingdom. I give you Macedonian arms. Foreign newcomers though you are, I have made you established members of my force: you are both my fellow-citizens and my soldiers" (10.3.13, transl. by J.C. Yardley). All these ideas fully coincide with Alexander's political agenda and are attested in other evidence. Curtius 10.3.14 assigns to Alexander the statement: "Those who are to live under the same king should enjoy the same rights" ("eiusdem iuris esse debent qui sub eodem rege victuri sunt"). The same idea of "harmony and partnership in rule" between Macedonians and Persians is expressed in Arrian 7.11.9 while describing the banquet at Opis. Then the speech deals with the customs and stresses that "everything is taking on the same hue: it is no disgrace for the Persians to copy Macedonian customs nor for the Macedonians to imitate the Persians" (10.3.14: "omnia eundem ducunt colorem. Nec Persis Macedonum morem adumbrare, nec Macedonibus Persas imitari indecorum," transl. by J.C. Yardley). As to the mutual contacts and customs concerning Macedonians and Iranians, the balance of demands is not equal. Curtius (10.3.14) uses two different verbs to show the demands for Macedonians (*imitari*) and Iranians (*adumbrare*).[23] As rightly observed by Dempsie (1991, 115), "it is the Macedonians who will have to change more" in their customs. A similar conclusion is offered by Justinus 12.12.2: "how he [*scil*. Alexander] had adopted their modes of conduct and not imposed his own on them" ("denique se in illorum, non illos in gentis suae morem transisse"). And that observation perfectly fits with Alexander's pro-Iranian policies in 330-323.

In the speech related in Curtius, Alexander mentions the Iranian phalanx consisting of select younger soldiers integrated in the main body of royal troops with the same uniform and the same weapons as the Macedonians (10.3.10). The king stresses (10.3.13) that the Iranians were

[23] Characteristically, Curtius also uses two different objects—*Macedonum morem* and *Persas*.

"his soldiers by family, not conscription" ("proinde genitos esse vos mihi, non ascitos milites credite"). This declaration, accompanied by several similar formulas, alludes to the fact that the Iranian soldiers, probably their élite, were called *syngeneis*, i.e. "kinsmen" (as related in Arr. 7.11.1) by Alexander, in a striking imitation of the Achaemenid Persian custom (Wiesehöfer 1980). After this significant speech there is a gap in the text. By comparison with Justinus and Diodorus it is to be supposed that Curtius would have mentioned, either in Alexander's speech or in his own narrative, the appointment of Persians to former Macedonian posts and the Macedonian unrest.

Alexander's speech in Curtius is a consistent manifestation of the king's political programme. Each point made by Alexander is attested in other Curtius' passages and in other related sources.

Justinus 12.12.2f. summarizes the speech of Alexander to the Iranians in *oratio obliqua*. First, the king highlights the incorporation of Iranian soldiers ("auxiliaries") into his army, and praises the Persian soldiers for their unfailing loyalty both to himself and to their former rulers. Secondly, he reminds them of acts of his pro-Iranian policies—they were not regarded as defeated enemies but as partners in victory. Third, he stresses the adoption of their modes of conduct while his own were not imposed on them. Fourth, he names the marriages between Macedonians and Iranians (12.12.2). As to political programme, all the points Justinus relates are identical with those transmitted in Curtius. Thus, the speech in Curtius is not a free invention of the author. It was surely existing in the original source shared by Curtius and Justinus.[24]

Curtius 10.4 provides a speech of one of the Macedonians sentenced to punishment. The officer accuses the king of ordering executions of a foreign kind. He demands "at least to change the executioners" (10.4.1). Apparently the latter were Iranians.[25] What Curtius clearly states is that after the previous executions the apologetic soldiers offered up their persons to Alexander urging him to slaughter them as their comrades (10.4.3). This attitude shows that the mutineers tried to win Alexander. Unfortunately, following that passage, there is a large lacuna in the

[24] Hammond (1983b, 107 and 158f.) argues for a shadowy Diyllus which seems unconvincing. More plausible is Clitarchus, see Dempsie 1991, 271f.

[25] Dempsie (1991, 116) argues that this section does not match up with "anything in other sources and would appear to be Curtius' own addition to add to the pathos." It is an unfounded interpretation ignoring Alexander's political concepts at this time.

Historiae Alexandri Magni, reaching up to Alexander's death. Other sources report the further events.

Facing the Macedonian mutiny, Alexander took measures which at once changed the character of his army. Now, the Iranians completely predominated in his armed forces and most of the Macedonians felt humiliated. Alexander's decision to call the Iranians his fellow-citizens and soldiers was not a hollow claim. His Iranian *epigonoi* replaced the élite Macedonian phalanx formation (Diod. Sic. 17.110.1f.; Iust. 12.11.4).

Another issue demonstrates Alexander's political aims: as attested in Diodorus, Justinus, Arrian and Plutarch, the Iranians were advanced into positions of high command and monopolized, at least temporarily, the personal protection of the king. That point is not contained in Curtius' preserved account. Justinus (12.12.3f.) reports that Alexander selected a thousand young men to join his bodyguard and entrusted to Iranians next to Macedonians his personal protection (*custodia corporis*). The same is said in Diodorus: the king assigned a thousand of Persians to the guards (*hypaspistai*) stationed at the court. In all respects he showed "the same confidence in them as in the Macedonians" (17.110.1). Plutarch (*Alex*. 71.4) goes even further—Alexander dismissed his former guards, and brought in Persians to do the job instead, using them to make up his units of bodyguards and attendants. The Iranians were given high military commands of the royal brigades. According to Arrian (7.11.1 and 3) and Diodorus (17.109.3), Alexander summoned the select Persians and distributed among them the commands of the royal brigades (*taxeis*). The Iranian troops were divided into *lochoi* (Arr. 7.11.3). The king created the Iranian formations of *pezhetairoi*, *asthetairoi* and *argyraspides*, labelling them with names hitherto reserved for Macedonian units (Arr. 7.11.3). A new royal Iranian infantry guard (*agema*, Diod. Sic. 17.110.1; Arr. 7.11.3; Iust. 12.12.3f.) and the separate Iranian cavalry formations of *hetairoi* and *agema basilike* (Arr. 7.11.3) were established. Alexander made the rule that only those Iranians whom he proclaimed his kinsmen (*syngeneis*) should have the honour of saluting him with a kiss (Arr. 7.11.1).

Due to the evidence of Diodorus, Justinus and Arrian it is possible to see how the Opis mutiny finished (Curtius' text is lacunous). *Communis opinio* says that following the initial rebuttal by Alexander, the Macedonian soldiers eventually prevailed upon Alexander to forgive them (Dempsie 1991, 119), which is not a convincing explanation. Also, "psychological" interpretations of the mutiny do not seem plausible.[26] It is

[26] E.g. Bosworth 1988a, 160: "the tension was broken, the hysterical lamentation replaced by equally hysterical rejoicing."

therefore worthwhile to examine the evidence again to evaluate the events. It was after Alexander appointed commanders from amongst the Persians that the Macedonians became repentant. Diodorus (17.109.3) says that they petitioned Alexander to forgive them and with difficulty persuaded him to take them back into favour. In Justinus 12.12.5-7 the appointments of the Iranians were resented by the Macedonians who complained that the king had transferred their duties to their enemies. The Macedonians came in tears to the king and begged him to vent the displeasure by punishing rather than humiliating them. By this "moderate request they prevailed upon him to discharge 11,000 veterans." According to Plutarch (*Alex*. 71.5-8), when the excluded and reviled Macedonians saw the king being escorted by Persians, they were humbled, and went—without carrying arms or wearing armour over their clothes—to Alexander's tent, staying there for two days and nights. Plutarch uses the term "jealous anger" (ζηλωτυπία) to describe Macedonian sentiments. On the third day Alexander emerged from his tent and spoke "kindly" to the soldiers. This statement matches with Arrian who claims Alexander remained in his tent for three days and Companions were not admitted to the king (7.11.1). Arrian provides more information on the final settlement ending the mutiny. Hearing about commands given to Persians and about Alexander's other pro-Iranian measures, the Macedonians ran together to the royal residence and begged to be let in. They displayed readiness to give up the "instigators of the disturbance and those who began the clamour." In describing Macedonian pleas for forgiveness, Arrian reports an officer, Callines, a spokesman for the rebels, as pointing to Macedonian envy of the king's calling Persians his "kinsmen" (*syngeneis*) and granting them the privilege to kiss him. Now Alexander named Macedonians "kinsmen" and allowed them to offer him the same greeting. At that point, the delighted Macedonians returned to the camp "shouting and singing their victory song" (Arr. 7.11.3-7).

The end of the mutiny was staged by Alexander for the greatest effect. If we trust Arrian, the whole "conciliation" borders on the grotesque. The motives for the mutiny as quoted by Callines do not at all tally with earlier Macedonian accusations against the king; in terror, the Macedonians demonstrated what must be seen as an unconditional surrender. No more mention was made of the king's Iranian dress, of the *epigonoi*, of Iranians dominating the army, or of other contentious issues. All had been reduced to mere envy—a sign that Macedonian traditionalists had beaten a complete retreat. An apparent concession cost Alexander nothing, and gave Macedonians no actual privileges. On the contrary, kissing the king was related to *proskynesis*, a gesture once fiercely opposed by most

Macedonians. On Alexander's part there was no reciprocity, for a royal kiss was a privilege.[27]

This issue invites a little comment. A detailed description of *proskynesis* in Persia is provided by Herodotus 1.134: Persians of equal rank kissed each other on the lips, with slight inferiority, the person of lower rank kissed the superior on the cheeks, while with great difference in status, the person of lower rank prostrated himself completely before the more dignified one.[28] Alexander introduced *proskynesis* in his court in 330 but, faced with strong opposition from Macedonians, he limited the practice probably only to Asians (Curt. 6.6.3; Plut. *Alex*. 45.1). For most Macedonians and Greeks *proskynesis* was associated with the divine sphere, and although, possibly, the king himself did not at that point claim recognition as a god, his demands were deemed to be going too far (cf. Badian 1996, 22). They were seen in the context of Alexander's "barbarization" and his acceptance of "Persian" ways. In Bactria (327), Alexander attempted to introduce this greeting also for Macedonians; some of them honoured Alexander in this way (Arr. 4.12.3-5 and Plut. *Alex*. 54.4-6 = Chares, *FGrHist* 125 F 14a).[29] Yet, Alexander's plan to introduce *proskynesis* was not accepted by most Macedonians and also by Hellenes in the court and military élite (Badian 1985, 458).[30] It was at Opis that *proskynesis* and the Persian title "kinsmen" (*syngeneis*) were imposed on the Macedonians.

Alexander's political measures at Susa and at Opis make up a consistent agenda relying on his concept of supporting Iranians as part of the imperial élite and predominating element in the army. It seems obvious that Susa was the "ultimate provocation" (rightly so Badian 1985, 482 n. 1), and Opis the decisive confrontation between Alexander and Macedonian traditionalists. At Susa, Alexander restrained himself to a display of power (Iranian *epigonoi*) and pro-Iranian measures, addressing

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[27] Roisman 2003, 299f.

[28] Cf. Hdt. 7.136; Plut. *Arist*. 5.7. Xenophon, who knew Persian realities, writes that the king's so-called kinsmen or *syngeneis* kissed him on the lips as they took their leave. A kiss from the king was a sign of his favour (Xen. *Cyr*. 1.4.27f.; *Ages*. 5.4f.).

[29] For the *proskynesis* affair in Bactria, see Curt. 8.5.9-6.1; Arr. 4.12.3-6; Plut. *Alex*. 54.3-55.1 (after Chares, *FGrHist* 125 F 14); Iust. 12.7.1-3. Cf. Hamilton 1987, 475f.; Seibert 1981, 202-4; Atkinson 1994, 201; Lauffer 1993, 136; Bosworth 1995, 77-90.

[30] It seems, however, that *proskynesis* for Macedonians was partially retained in 327-324, only limited to some *hetairoi*. This is implied by Arr. 4.14.2. *Contra* Iust. 12.7.3.

the discontent Macedonian soldiers, while at Opis he was able to take revenge on them for the mutiny in India, for rejecting his "barbarian customs" and regalia, his pro-Iranian reforms and for all the scoffs concerning his "father" Zeus-Ammon. After the *epigonoi*-display at Susa, Alexander did not have to be afraid of the Macedonian mutiny for he created a new royal and loyal armed Iranian force. The *epigonoi* were fully capable of serving as a counterbalance to the Macedonian phalanx. The same can be said about the Iranian cavalry, dominating in the army since the campaign in India. At Opis, Alexander used different means to be in control of the situation and to break the Macedonian resistance—he punished the mutineers, appointed Iranian commanders, and established new Iranian guards units replacing the Macedonians or at least counterbalancing them.

Following the capitulation by the Macedonians, Alexander held a public banquet for thousands of people chiefly including Macedonians and Iranians.[31] Recent scholarly descriptions of the feast as a reconciliation find no basis in source accounts.[32] A unique description of the feast is provided by Arrian; considering its importance for the present study, his account must be cited in full:

> Alexander celebrated the occasion by sacrificing to the gods he normally sacrificed to, and offering a public banquet. He sat down and so did everyone else, the Macedonians around him, the Persians next to them, then any of the other peoples who enjoyed precedence for their reputation or some other quality. Then he and those around him drew wine from the same bowl and poured the same libations, beginning with the Greek seers and the Magians. He prayed for other blessings and for harmony and partnership in rule between Macedonians and Persians. It is said that there were 9,000 guests at the banquet, who all poured the same libation and then sang the song of victory (Arr. 7.11.8f., transl. by Austin 2006, no. 18).

It seems obvious that to Arrian and his source the banquet at Opis is "not of outstanding importance" (Badian 1958, 428). This much-debated ceremony is described very briefly in a passage which is approximately of the same length as the rendition of Callines' speech.

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[31] Cf. Tarn 1948, vol. 2, 434-8; Badian 1958, 428-32; Hutzel 1974, 212-4; Bosworth 1988a, 160f.

[32] Tarn 1948, vol. 2, 440: "a thanksgiving for reconciliation"; Lauffer 1993, 174: "Versöhnungsfest." Wüst 1953a rightly argues that the Opis banquet was a forced "Bittgottesdienst." Similarly, Badian (1958, 428) shows that the banquet was not a reconciliation or "conclusion of peace."

Many scholars treat Arrian's narrative as giving a deliberate hierarchy among Alexander's subjects. According to this view, what is crucial is the order of the participants at the feast and their distance to Alexander which allegedly point to the assumption that the "Macedonians enjoy precedence" (Brunt 1983, 240 n. 6). In turn, this "precedence" should suggest that Alexander's pro-Iranian reforms at Susa and at Opis were revoked. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence to believe that pro-Iranian reforms and decisions were cancelled. On the contrary, after the banquet Alexander dismissed veterans and retained some Macedonian units with him according to his previous plan.

Arrian tells us how the participants were grouped. Around Alexander (ἀμφ᾽ αὐτόν) were Macedonians, next to them (ἐν τῷ ἐφεξῆς τούτων) Persians, and behind them (ἐπὶ τούτοις) persons from the other peoples. To describe the Persians' placement, Arrian uses the term ἐφεξῆς which may be translated as "next to," and thus it is possible to place the Persians in the same circle as the Macedonians, both peoples around Alexander. Representatives of other nations are clearly placed by Arrian behind the central group around Alexander (ἐπὶ τούτοις). The assumption that Macedonians and Persians were grouped together around Alexander is decisively corroborated by the fact that the whole ceremony and sacrifice concerned first of all those two peoples, for Arrian writes about partnership between Macedonians and Persians. Alexander prayed for harmony (ὁμόνοια) and a sense of community in one state and in the exercise of power (κοινωνία τῆς ἀρχῆς) for Macedonians and Persians (Arr. 7.11.8f.).

In Arrian's account, the emphatic repetition of the phrase ἀμφ᾽ αὐτόν within the same passage is to be underscored. First it refers to the group seated around Alexander. Then it refers to the persons who, next to Alexander, drank from the same bowl and poured the same libations. Importantly, the prayers and ceremony were initiated by Alexander's Greek soothsayers[33] and Iranian *Magoi*, representing, respectively, the Macedonian and Iranian elements. In other words, the initial drinking and pouring of libations must have been common to both peoples—Macedonians and Iranians alike.[34]

Indeed, what Arrian transmits is the same political programme of Alexander as reported in Curtius, particularly in Alexander's speech to the Iranians given in Opis (see especially Curt. 10.3.14). It is a concept of combined Iranian-Macedonian élite, fiercely opposed by most

[33] Philip II and Alexander kept a staff of seers including persons like Aristander and Demophon, see Berve 1926, vol. 2, 62f. and 141.

[34] Badian (1958, 429) is not convincing in his conclusion that "the sharing of Alexander's own krater was limited to the Macedonians"; the source is precise.

Macedonians. For the traditionally-minded Macedonians, the king's banquet marked their capitulation to him. The feast at Opis was another show of Iranian power in the state. None of the demands put forward by the Macedonian mutineers was fulfilled. Quite the opposite: it was the Iranians who now predominated in the army and formed royal guards. Arrian (7.12.4) maintains that Alexander expected Antipater to bring reinforcements from Macedonia, but it is apparently a hollow claim. No fresh Macedonian troops came to Alexander until his death.

After the Opis ceremony, veterans left for Macedonia, "of their own accord," Arrian informs us. It is, however, doubtful that the Macedonians had freedom of choice (Hutzel 1974, 215). But even at this stage another humiliation was in store for them: the king kept with him their children born in Asia (Arr. 7.12.1f.). They were to serve as hostages and recruits for the royal army in Asia. At the head of the departing veterans rode Craterus, definitely a defender of Macedonian tradition. The king's political gains were considerable: he had got rid of hard-core Macedonian opposition in his army and of a potential opponent in Craterus (Arr. 7.12.3). The rest of the Macedonians were forced to stay in Asia. No general demobilization ensued.

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Defining Alexander's policy toward Asians, and particularly Iranians, is a key issue in a full reconstruction of the history of Alexander and the peoples of his empire. From 330 on, his concept of power was based on the fundamental assumption that Macedonians and Iranians were together to make up the élite running the new empire. Beginning with the official proclamation of the new policy toward the Iranians in Parthia in summer 330, Alexander's attitude to the Macedonians underwent a considerable change. Increasingly pro-Iranian policy was bound to pit the king against his Macedonian environment. The wedding ceremonies of the king and the *hetairoi* at Susa conducted according to the "Persian" ceremonial and the legalization of unions of Macedonians with Asian women were an essential step in the process that made Iranians equal to Macedonians. Now that was more than the most Macedonians could stomach. Over the years, the breach deepened and came to a head in the Opis mutiny and its consequent bloody quelling by Alexander (324). After the 330 reforms in Parthia, more reforms in Bactria and Sogdiana in 328-327, after his army had become mostly Iranian, finally after the measures taken in Persis (including Peucestas' appointment) and Susa, Alexander's political

programme as declared at Opis cannot be seen as surprising. If anything, it is a direct consequence of Alexander's policy toward the Iranians.

The available sources give a consistent picture of Alexander's pro-Iranian policy at Susa and at Opis. Curtius' narrative in the *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 10.2-4 , although mutilated by some gaps, offers a vivid and at some points unique account of the Iranians' role and Alexander's policies towards the Iranians in 324. The speeches Curtius provides in 10.2-4, although rhetorically embellished and showing similarities to speeches known in Roman historical tradition,[35] are in substance genuine, i.e. they offer historical information of essential significance. An examination of the details offered by Curtius proves a high degree of coherence in his account.[36] The evidence given by him must be used with caution but he often gives details compatible with other sources: the works of Diodorus, Justinus, Plutarch and Arrian contain elements descriptive of Alexander's political concept *vis-à-vis* the Iranians. These elements interlock to make up a consistent whole.

In Curtius, pronouncements of Alexander's policies, his "barbarization," and rebellions or conspiracies against him are concurrent with the larger context and, in their core, include arguments and notions that cannot be dismissed as artistic ornaments or rhetorical inventions. Facts embedded in an utterance should be carefully distinguished from embellishments. Finally, if Curtius is blamed for rhetorical ambitions, it does not have to be as deprecatory as it is often thought. Suffice it to mention Cicero (*De or*. 2.62-4), who thought of history as a category of literary prose akin to speeches. Indeed, speeches in Curtius, especially in 10.2-4, are crucial to their context. It is evident that they are often grounded in his sources rather than being random enunciations unrelated to actual figures and events. And although they may contain some clear allusions to contemporary political events (so, for example, Curtius catalogues Alexander's virtues, including *fortitudo* and *liberalitas*, so as to echo Roman emperors' propaganda), they do not distort the central issues derived from primary sources.

[35] Cf. Helmreich 1927; Rutz 1983.

[36] While introducing a speech by a Scythian envoy in Central Asia, Curtius 7.8.11 stresses his concern for reliability: "Sed, ut possit oratio eorum sperni, tamen fides nostra non debet; quae utcumque sunt tradita incorrupta proferemus."